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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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EXAMINER

STOKLOSA, JOSEPH A

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3762

NOTIFICATION DATE	DELIVERY MODE
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07/09/2008

ELECTRONIC

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

patent@cblh.com

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/825,358	Applicant(s) DADD ET AL.	
	Examiner JOSEPH STOKLOSA	Art Unit 3762	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 09 April 2008.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-6, 8-17, 20, 21, 24-26 and 28-62 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-6, 8-17, 20-21, 24-26, 28-62 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 4/9/2008 has been entered.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

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3. Claims 1-3, 8, 14-17, 20, 24, 28-30, 32-35, 39, 45-49 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kuzma (US 6,119,044) in view of Wappler (US 1,146,292).

4. Kuzma discloses a device, comprising an elongate member including at least one electrode (see for example Figure 1, Abstract), and a tip member extending distally from a distal end of the elongate member (see for example Figure 4). The Kuzma reference also discloses the tip as comprising a distally tapered portion and a blunt end portion at a distal end of the tapered portion (see for example Figure 4), and further teaches of the tip member being resiliently flexible (see for example Abstract, col. 11 lines 39-42). It is noted that the device disclosed by Kuzma is inherently capable of resisting fold over of the tip when inserted into the cochlea due to the tapering of the electrode array and the smaller cross-sectional area at the proximal tip. Applicant does not claim the tip dimensions including length, radius, etc., therefore Examiner considers the portion disclosed in section L8 of Fig. 4 to be the tip, which is apparently geometrically incapable of folding over itself.

5. In regards to claims 2, 8, 33-34, 39, Examiner takes the position that the tapered portion of the tip, as taught by Kuzma, is substantially tapered continuously down to the distal soft tip, where it is seen in Fig. 4 that the tip is tapered as well in that the diameter is decreased from the proximal end of L8 to a smaller diameter at the distal end of L8. (see for example Figures 4, 14).

6. In regards to claim 14, 45, Examiner takes the position that Kuzma teaches the tip member is capable of being integral with the elongate member (see for example Figure 15).

7. In regards to claim 15, 46, Kuzma teaches of the tip member being mounted on the distal end of the elongate member (see for example Figure 14).

8. In regards to claim 16, 47, Kuzma teaches of a tip member that includes a lumen therein (see for example Figure 14).

9. In regards to claims 17, 48, the Kuzma reference teaches of a device wherein the elongated member includes a lumen therein for allowing a stiffening element to be inserted through said elongate member and for allowing a distal end of said stiffening element to extend into said lumen in said tip member (see for example Figure 16 and Abstract).

10. Examiner interprets the lumen to extend through the carrier body and continue all the way to the distal tip, 37. Kuzma states the straightening stylet is inserted into the channel of the electrode array until the tip of the stylet reaches the distal tip, 14, of the array (Fig. 15, 14; Col. 8, line 1-6).

11. In regards to claim 20, 49, the Kuzma reference teaches of a system wherein the tip member inherently has a substantially uniform bending stress distribution in an axial direction, since the tip is of one material and circular and therefore has uniform bending stress (see for example Figure 4).

12. With regard to claim 29-30, 59-61, Kuzma discloses a tip member (Fig. 4, 37) that is made of LSR-25 supported by the electrode array that is made of LSR-70 (Col.

11, line 22-50). LSR 25 and LSR-70 have substantially the same flexibility with LSR-70 being slightly stiffer.

13. Merriam Webster defines a cantilever as, "a projecting beam or member supported at only one end." Accordingly, the device disclosed by Kuzma sufficiently meets this limitation through the use of a stiffer carrier array body composed of LSR-70.

14. With regard to claim 62, Kuzma discloses the use of a stiffening device stylet (ABSTRACT).

15. Kuzma discloses the invention as claimed including a flexible tip, but fails to teach a conical tapered portion tapering and extending distally from the distal end of the electrode array. Wappler teaches that it is known to have a conical tapering at the distal end of an electrode array as set forth in Fig. 1, 15; line 66-67, for providing the predictable results of preventing fold-over of the tip member and also facilitating insertion of the electrode array. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the system as taught by Kuzma with a conical tapered portion tapering and extending distally from the distal end of the electrode array, since such a modification was known in the art to provide the predictable results of preventing fold-over of the tip member and also facilitating insertion of the electrode array and providing a more rigid support to facilitate placement.

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16. Claims 5, 6, 12, 13, 37, 38, 43-44, and 59-62 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Kuzma (U.S. Patent No. 6,119,044) in view of Wappler as applied above.

17. In regards to claim 5-6, and 37-38, Kuzma teaches of a barrel portion having a length (L8) that is 0.3 mm, which Examiner interprets as being about 0.4 mm. Similarly, in regards to claim 6, Kuzma teaches of the barrel portion having a diameter (L6) that is 0.6 mm, which Examiner interprets as being about 0.45 mm in diameter. Or in the alternative, Examiner takes the position that the dimensions of claims 5 and 6 would have been obvious modifications to system as taught by Kuzma.

18. In regards to claims 12-13 and 43-44, Examiner takes the position that the blunt end portion of the distal tip can be interpreted as part ellipsoidal or part spherical in shape (see for example Figure 6). Or in the alternative, Examiner takes the position that it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the system as taught by Kuzma to include the limitations as specified in claims 12 and 13 to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of the system.

19. Claims 4, 9, 10, 11, 21, 25 –26, 36, 40-42, 50-58, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kuzma in view of Wappler.

20. In regards to claims 4, 21, 25, 26, 36, 50, Kuzma does not specifically teach that the elongate member has a diameter greater than the diameter of tip member's barrel portion; Examiner takes the position that such a configuration is well known in the art. Further, although the Kuzma reference discloses the use of silicone rubber (see for example col. 10 lines 58-62), the reference does not specifically teach of the use of a

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liquid silicone; however, Examiner takes the position that the use of liquid silicone is well known in the art and a modification of the Kuzma reference to include liquid silicone would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art, since it is known in the art to provide efficient and effective operation.

21. In regards to claims 9-11, 40-42, 51-58 (Examiner interprets the dimensions of claim 9 as the length of the tapered portion of the tip member) Examiner takes the position that although the Kuzma reference teaches of elongated tapered device, it does not specifically teach of the exact dimensional parameters as specified in claims; however, Examiner takes the position that it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the system as taught by Kuzma with the dimensional parameters as specified in the claims, since it has been held that where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, discovering the optimum or workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art. In re Aller, 105 USPQ 233.

22. In regards to claim 31, Kuzma discloses the claimed invention, but fails to disclose an alignment indicator between the carrier body and the tip. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the system as taught by Kuzma, since such a modification would provide for ensuring clean mating between the tip and carrier body. Further Claim 31 is a product by process claim and Kuzma anticipates the final product.

23. With regard to claim 59, Kuzma in view of Wappler discloses the invention as claimed, but fails to teach the dimensions of the conical tapered portion to be 76mm in

length and tapering from a diameter of .45 to .2mm. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the system as taught Kuzma in view of Wappler, since it has been held that where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, discovering the optimum workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art [*In re Aller*, 105 USPQ 233] and/or since it has been held that a prima facie case of obviousness exists where the claimed ranges and prior art ranges do not overlap but are close enough that one skilled in the art would have expected them to have the same properties. *Titanium Metals Corp. of America v. Banner*, 778 F.2d 775, 227 USPQ (Please see MPEP 2144.05).

Response to Arguments

2. Applicant's arguments filed 4/9/2008 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

In response to applicant's argument that there is no suggestion to combine the references, the examiner recognizes that obviousness can only be established by combining or modifying the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention where there is some teaching, suggestion, or motivation to do so found either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art. See *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 USPQ2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988) and *In re Jones*, 958 F.2d 347, 21 USPQ2d 1941 (Fed. Cir. 1992). In this case, Wappler teaches the use of a coniform tip. It is generally well known in the mechanical arts that a coniform tip provides greater resistance to shearing forces upon implantation and prevents fold-over.

3. With regard to applicant's newly added claim amendment, Examiner reminds applicant that Wappler is relied upon solely for teaching a coniform tip, and that Kuzma teaches that a tip member be flexible.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to JOSEPH STOKLOSA whose telephone number is (571)272-1213. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 7:30-4:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Angela Sykes can be reached on 571-272-4955. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/George R Evanisko/
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7/3/2008